

"The Fruitbowl"
Flesh 18 Spirit 9

Topic: Galatians 5:19-23
Scripture: Galatians 5

(Illustration little boy and prayers after football game)

I believe that some people, and some wives in particular, have declared that if someone so much as mentions another "Bowl" game, they will scream, because of the vast number of games on TV the last day or so. Well at the risk of hearing one of you ladies burst forth into an unbecoming squeal, I would like to suggest yet another "Bowl." The "Bowl" I am referring to is one which is played each and every day of everyone's life. It is unlike any "Bowl" concocted by any sport planning committee. The rules differ radically with any contest played. Yet it is a "Bowl" into which we must enter and play as though we are fighting for our very lives, because we are. It is a game we ^{dare not} ~~cannot~~ lose, and yet the odds are stacked against us from the very first whistle.

Have you ever heard of a game that had a pre-determined score before it ever started? Well this is exactly the kind of game we are compelled to play in. We cannot sit back and say that we do not care to participate. Or to state that games are for those who are more skilled than us, or that someone younger should play in our place. None of these answers apply in this "Bowl."

Paul lists the score before the game begins in the 5th chapter of Galatians, and I would like you to turn to that chapter with me and let us look at what he is saying. In verse 19, he speaks of the works of the flesh regarding immorality. A person may not be guilty of all of these, but ^{we} ~~he~~ face the temptations of them in our daily lives, and in the world in which we live and move. Then in verses 20 and 21, Paul gives us a list of works of the flesh that are very common to all of us, and ones which cause us a lot of grief and concern. If you add all of them up you will come to a total of 18, which means that the game is stacked against us even before the kickoff. (For those of you who are questioning my mathematics, which at times is questionable, I am using the King James Version, and there are 18 things listed there, because we must add, "and such like," because ~~it~~ there are other things which could be added to this list, but have not been placed there.)

And then Paul goes on to give the score of the works of the Spirit in verses 22 and 23, and we find there are 9 of these. Thus the score at the kickoff is Flesh 18, Spirit 9.

Kickoff of course would be the beginning of life, birth. We are born into a world in which all of the adverse things are present. God didn't plan it this way, but because of man turning from God, sin came into the world and because of this we all fall heir to it. But God has provided us with the game plan which if followed, will lead to defeat of the flesh, even though we are the underdog in this fight.

I believe that as we stand at the very beginning of ~~the~~ another unknown quantity, a new year, we need to put this game plan into action in our lives and strive to map out our strategy to fight our opponent and seek victory. We can find this plan throughout all of God's Word, but Paul gives it to us in simplified form in 3 verses of this morning's Scripture. The first part is found in verse 16.

"WALK in the Spirit." Basically if we WALK in the Spirit we will overcome all 18 of the opponents points, and specifically as Paul points out, "The lust of the flesh." ~~This would take care of overcoming the fleshly works as found in verse 19.~~

The thing we notice in each of these verses we will be dealing with is that Paul is speaking of our actions being motivated by the Holy Spirit. That we first of all to WALK in the Spirit means that our lives become a reflection of what we are to be. It means that we not only profess to have Christ in our hearts, but we show Him in the way we live daily.

(Illustration of little boy and canary)

This is what we each need to declare to God this day, "That we do not want to keep anything in our lives that will hurt God." We talk about doing away with the old desires and habits in our lives each New Year. We make New Year's resolutions to be better and do better in the New Year. What better way to start than to rid ourselves of the things that hurt and offend ~~him~~ and grieve the heart of the Lord Jesus. We need to look within and find the tinsel toys of

the world that are kept hidden and known only to us and the Lord. And then dispose of them for good.

The second verse of Scripture that Paul provides as the game plan for everyone is found in the 18th verse. Here Paul is saying "Be led by the Spirit."

(Illustration of Obituary, man complaining, editor to run name in birth column)

~~this is what~~ Wouldn't it be terrific if we could start over today? We think of new beginnings but too often they never materialize because we are too lazy, or we may feel, "What's the use? No one cares anyhow." Or we may feel that it is too late in life. But whatever our reasons for not making new starts and having a fresh viewpoint in our lives, it is not too late to resolve to begin today. And the best place to start is to begin with God's guidance. To be led by Him. Anita Bryant tells us on a commercial that a day without orange juice is like a day without sunshine. We could paraphrase this and make it, "A day without the Bible is like a day without sunshine." To those of you who read your Bibles everyday, you know the meaning of this remark. To those of you who do not read your Bibles, I would urge you to do so. A regular systematic reading of the Scriptures will not only help you to understand what God has done in the past, but will give you the opportunity to let God speak to your heart and lead you in the direction He wants your life to take.

You may feel or say that you do not have the time, or that you do not like to read etc, etc. But almost all of us read the newspaper right? If we can find time to read the paper, we can reserve a few minutes to read God's Word. This isn't asking too much of anyone, and if you can find strength and help for each day through it, it is time well spent. I cannot completely convince any of you of the benefits derived from God's Word, because you cannot completely understand it until you see for yourself. ~~And Paul is saying in this verse that~~
~~you are led by the Spirit~~ So why not resolve that this will be the year in which you not only read God's Word daily, but the year in which God is going to change your life, by His revelation to you of Himself.

The third ~~thing~~ verse of Scripture in Paul's gameplan for us is to be found in

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS JANUARY 2, 1977
THE REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. WALLACE FEDER, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
BRENDA MARBURGER, DAN BOSKO - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP - 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE "POEM" DENTON
*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 63 "OUR GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST"
*ASCRIPTION - CHORAL AMEN
*EXHORTATION
*CONFESSION "ETERNAL FATHER, TEACH US IN THE DAYS OF
THIS YEAR TO DISCOVER THE PRECIOUSNESS OF TIME. KEEP
US FROM SQUANDERING OUR HOURS IN SENSELESS THOUGHT
AND USELESS ACTIVITIES. HELP US THROUGH GOOD BOOKS,
CLEAN CONVERSATION, AND CREATIVE ACTION TO SO NUMBER
OUR DAYS THAT WE MAY GET A HEART OF WISDOM, AND A LIFE
DEVOTED TO THY RECONCILING MINISTRY IN THE WORLD;
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. AMEN."
*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)
*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN
*PRAISE
*PASTOR: 'O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.
*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE
*DOXOLOGY No. 551
SCRIPTURE: GALATIANS 5:22-23 *BIBLE READING GEN 4,5,6*
REQUIEM OBSERVANCE: *LET US BEGIN 77.*
RALPH T. KILLEAN GEORGE L. DAVIS
NORA B. THOMPSON RUBY H. GROSZMAN
JOHN K. WILSON EVERETT H. MCCANDLESS
AMELIA DREHER MABEL SANDBACH (PAST MEMBER)
HYMN No. 418 "FOR ALL THE SAINTS WHO FROM THEIR LABORS REST"
CALL TO PRAYER
PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU
PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT
PASTOR: LET US PRAY
PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE
OFFERING
OFFERTORY "LITANY" SCHUBERT
HYMN: "HE" - SOLO BY KAREN MALONEY

SERMON: "THE FRUITBOWL"

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER
*HYMN OF DEDICATION No. 35 "LORD, DISMISS US WITH
THY BLESSING"
BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN
ORGAN POSTLUDE: "PRAISE TO THE LORD, ALMIGHTY" WILSON
- - - - - *CONGREGATION STANDING - - - - -
THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
MR. & MRS. RODNEY RENSEL IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE
"GRANDPARENTS"
SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *ALLEN BOTACCHI, JOHN
REDMAN, DAN BOSKO, ROBERT KANUER, CHARLES PENAR.
DEACON AND MRS. RICHARD MANGEL WILL BE AT THE DOOR
TODAY.
NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY SANDY SHEPPECK
AND BONNIE VENSEL.
HOSPITALIZED: RICHARD CROUSE - MERCY HOSPITAL.
DR. HOMER FILSON - BOMH.
THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S BOOKS ARE CLOSED ANYTHING
NOW WILL BE PLACED IN 1977 BOOKS.
PLEASE ONLY USE NEW ENVELOPES AND DO NOT USE OLD ONES.
THE NUMBERS CHANGE FROM YEAR TO YEAR AND IT CAN GET
VERY CONFUSING.
WED. - 7:30 - CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
THURS. - 7:00 - BIBLE STUDY IN THE UNDERCROFT
THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY - PLEASE
HAVE ALL THE MATERIAL IN BY WEDNESDAY.
THE ARC CLASS WILL HAVE A DINNER AND WILL GO TO SEE
THE LITTLE THEATER PLAY "AVANTI" (COMEDY) - JAN. 22.
DINNER WILL BE AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE ELKS. YOU CAN
COME TO ONE OR BOTH. EVERYONE WILL ORDER THEIR MEAL
SEPARATELY. RESERVATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE BY
JANUARY 9TH. PLEASE CALL AFTER 6:00 P.M. JEANNIE
MCBRIDE - 283-8980 OR DELORES BOTACCHI - 287-7294.
WE WILL NEED SOMEONE FOR FLOWERS FOR NEXT WEEK (9TH),
ALSO THE 23RD, AND THE 6TH OF FEBRUARY. IF YOU WOULD
POSSIBLY WANT ONE OF THESE DATES - PLEASE LEAVE BEA
TAYLOR KNOW IN THE OFFICE.
THE STAIR-GLIDE, NEW ALTAR CLOTH AND PORTABLE FLOOR
MODEL SOUND LECTERN WILL BE DEDICATED NEXT SUNDAY.
JAN 10 - ST. PAUL'S NEEDS PEOPLE TO GO TO SUNNYVIEW
AT 1:00 - PLEASE COME ALONG AND HELP SING AND ETC.

Text: Galatians 5:19-23

Scripture: Galatians 5

(Illus little boy, football game & prayers)

Wives, bowl games & scream=risk unBcom squeal, "Fruitbowl

U lik any Bowl, Bowl we play ea everday lif

Ruls diff any contest played, yet, game must enter &
must fite as tho lif depend, Bcuz it duz

Game dare no lose, but odds stack gainst from start
Ever herd game scor pre-determ? This game we involv

P list scor 5 Gal, (turn & C), vs 19 wrks flesh
1st Immoral, 20-21 common 2 all/add up & get 18

If U quest my math(& it question) KJV=18, & such like

Vss 22, 23, wrks Spirit=9, at kickoff Fl 18, Sp 9

unknow quant=Nu Yr & mus put game plan in2 action

P giv us this 3 vss

1ST=vs 16=WALK, show Xp in habits & how liv daily

(Illus little boy & canary)

Ea mus declar 2 G, Need do away old desir, habits

Wat bettr way rid selvs thing hurt, griev Lord Js?

Need look within & find tinsel toys world kept

hidden & known only 2 G & us, & then dispos them

2ND=vs 18=LED (Illus man & Obit & Nu start)

Wudnt B terrif if cud start over? Nu Bgins & ~~xxxx~~

starts no can do, or who cares, 2 lazy or 2 late

It not 2 late 2 resolv 2 Bgin 2day & best place

2 start is G's guidance, 2 B LED by Him

Anita Bryant=Day without or juic lik day without sun

para=Day without Bible lik day without sunshine

2 thoz who read, know truth state, 2 thoz who do not,

urg 2 read regularly, systematically

This giv opp 2 let G speak 2 U, & direct Ur lif

No time=read news?=hav time 2 read Bib

I cannot convinc until U try 4 self,

So why not resolv this B yr which G chang Ur lif

3RD=vs 25=LIVE, P say=WALK=B examp, LED=G's Word open

Now LIVE=2 stand 4th with Boldness & tell word/deed

(Illus Hugh Latimer & Henry VIII)

This wat Saviour seek NU YR, we B honest servants

Need tak inventory selves, families secularly &

Spiritually as well

Questions: Am I timid fenc straddler?

" " ashamed 2 mention Js Xp outside circl
of friends?

" " week-kneed, & peop no know I Xpian?

If Y, or uncert need determ this yr 2 score

If don't score indiv 4 us=Fl 18, Sp 9, & opp 2 O'com

world as Xp desir 4 us is gone. Insted B victor/defea

Let us: WALK, B LED, & LIV in SP as G direct this NU YR

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.